

THOUSANDS OF TEUTONS BANISHED TO SIBERIA

Civilians as Well as Prisoners of War Suffer Horribly From Icy Weather and Lack of Proper Care.

By P. G. McDONNELL.

Siberia! What thoughts arise at the mention of the word! Even today this enormous territory of approximately six million square miles, a continent in size, beside which the United States, China and Russia are dwarfed, is almost as unknown as the interior of South America or darkest Africa. The building of the remarkable trans-Siberian railroad and the events of the Russo-Japanese war threw the spotlight of world interest onto this vast region extending from the Pacific Ocean to the Ural Mountains, from China and Turkistan and the edge of Europe clear across Asia to the impassable ice fields of the Arctic. Into this vast region of Siberia the German and Austrian prisoners were transported. The declaration of war was followed by a roundup of German subjects living in Russia. Many have been following commercial and professional careers for years, and others, while of Teutonic birth, have spent their lives in Russia. Their business and property were promptly confiscated and they were hustled off to Siberia.

The civilian prisoners made up the first contingent that followed the great train of the exiles to the great gulag. Box cars of the railroad relieved them of the necessity of marching as the exiles did. Most of them were taken from their homes so hurriedly that they were not able to provide themselves with sufficient clothes or to secure funds for the purchase of more. Friends could not reach them, as they simply disappeared into the great unknown. It was a long time before communication was established.

Frozen on Long Journey.

It seems that the roundup of enemy civilians was general throughout northern Russia and Siberia. At Harbin I was told on excellent authority that several residents of Vladivostok and vicinity were loaded on open freight cars and shipped west, about thirty-six hours travel. They were crowded and were not allowed to leave the cars during the journey. Bitter weather caused much suffering. The prisoners being frozen as well as famished. As far as I could ascertain from reliable sources several thousand civilian prisoners were sent to Siberia during the first six months of the war, at which time this movement seems to have stopped, probably because the dragnet had completed its work.

Many of the civilian prisoners are pathetic and terrible. The range and intensity of war's influence are exemplified in the case of these unfortunate. Separated by thousands of miles from their home country and the zone of hostilities they are made to feel the sting of war as much if not more than the soldiers in the trenches. And the women and children are not protected as are the families in the homeland for they share the suffering and exposure with the men.

I am trying to tell the story with a sympathetic regard for the truth even in smallest details. The facts are given in good faith based on personal observation and on sources of information which I consider reliable. I have spent much effort in eliminating matter concerning which there is any reasonable doubt.

Russian officials are so reliant on the whole subject of Siberian prison camps and have set up such tight barriers against attempts at investigation that I believe the real facts are reaching the public now for the first time. Some idea of the Russian attitude may be obtained from the following statement made by the Military Governor of Vladivostok: "It is the concern of no neutral power how Russia treats her prisoners of war and what she does with them."

Civilians Badly Treated. The civilian prisoners were in much worse circumstances than the military prisoners. The former were given soldiers' fare and treated as prisoners of war, approximately as well as the Russian soldiers themselves. The civilians were dumped on commodities and were not given more than their own members and were left practically at the mercy of the most uncomfortable peasant.

They were given no food for themselves, but without adequate food or shelter in the middle of a Siberian winter there was very little opportunity to do work of any kind for to buy supplies even if they had the money. The peasant communities were not generally hostile to the prisoners, in fact in many instances they wanted to help them. The soldiers, however, were not in a position to do so without depriving themselves of the necessities of life.

Officials Incompetent. It was not infrequent for cases to be left for days or abandoned altogether when expert treatment was urgently necessary. I do not believe it was cruelty or intentional neglect, though sometimes it is hard to escape this conclusion; but rather the utter incompetence of some of the provincial officials and the criminal lack of provision by the Russian central authorities. They simply started the civilian prisoners eastward on the railroad, transferred them to various remote places in the great exile colony and promptly forgot about them or took no interest in their welfare that it amounted to the same thing.

The Government supplied them with only ten kopeks a day for food. It was ridiculously small and though the poorer Germans and Austrians were generally helped by their countrymen, the poorer Russians who had money, it was not long before this disappeared and the suffering was acute.

Money does the Russian guards shared their meals with the prisoners, but the guards became fewer and fewer as the distance increased and the need for food increased. The number of prisoners remained the same except for a few deaths, so even the charity failed.

Conditions of the prisoners suffered indignities such as being clubbed with the butt of a rifle when they could not march fast enough, while others were tied together with Russian criminals, both men and women.

Jewelry had been taken from the prisoners without giving proper receipts therefor, but such complaints were made by prisoners unable to speak Russian who at the time the receipts were issued had no way of verifying their correctness. This matter was reported to the Governor, who said:

"Articles taken from prisoners will be returned to them in due course. That all the prisoners have not received their valuables is due to the fact that they were moved in the beginning from one prison to another; that their valuables followed them, had to be checked up and receipted for at each place, and consequently would not reach the prisoners' final destination until months after they had arrived."

This may explain the delay, but does not explain the absence from the receipts of such things as wedding rings, stickpins, etc.

Prisoners Lack Money.

Irkutsk is used as a temporary prison camp for civilians en route to more Siberian stations. It is a large, prosperous city, and an important railroad center. The Governor and some of the church officials are kindly men much distressed at the unfortunate plight of their increasingly numerous charges. The condition of such prisoners as have no money has been pitiable and the mortality is reported as large, especially during the first few months of winter. Better arrangements are now in effect and the suffering is less severe.

At the intercession of prominent Russians whose names it is not convenient to mention at the moment, the Governor of Irkutsk agreed to give the German and Austrian civilian prisoners the same allowances as convicts, twelve to fifteen rubles a month, provided application be made to the police, who investigate and pass on each case. Up to January 1 this money had not been distributed, but it is understood that later on some help was given. The Governor stated that he had an annual fund available for charity within the province on which he had asked permission to draw for the benefit of the prisoners, but the answer had not been received. The fund was sufficient to provide about 120 rubles for each civilian prisoner then within the province.

Cost of Living High.

In the detention villages it costs from twelve to twenty rubles a month, depending on the locality, to support a man. The cost of living is comparatively cheap, but the cost of necessities such as flour, sugar, tea, medicines, etc., increases with the distance. At remote places it is difficult to buy clothing even if money is available. The average cost of a room with fuel is about six rubles a month and many of the prisoners are quartered eight in a room. As long as the money is available, the prisoners can exist, but the lack of clothing and the bitter cold prevent them getting exercise.

In the majority of places there is no work to be had and hundreds passed the winter in crowded rooms huddled about the fires. Efforts were made by the American and German Red Cross to send clothing and food, but they seem to have failed, at least during the earlier months of the war, owing to the fact that private freight was refused on the main railroad lines while the movement of troops and supplies to the western front was going on. As Vladivostok has been choked with war supplies and munitions from the United States for several months, being practically the only Russian outlet during the long period when Archangel is frozen, it is not likely that there is much opportunity for handling ordinary freight.

At the end of the year there were fifty-seven Germans and nine Austrians at Kirovsk, where it was reported eighteen were in immediate want and twenty others would be in a bad way within two months. The minimum cost of living there is higher than usual, about 25 rubles a month. North of Irkutsk at Tschita or their increases. Bargushinskii and Nerzhinskii, according to information considered reliable, about two hundred prisoners were assembled, having been sent out from Russia with passports stamped "civil prisoners of war."

"To Be Closely Watched."

Some passports bore instructions that the bearer was to be closely watched and rigorously treated. Ten kopeks a day was given for food en route, which is about 5 cents American currency.

Officials Incompetent.

It was not infrequent for cases to be left for days or abandoned altogether when expert treatment was urgently necessary. I do not believe it was cruelty or intentional neglect, though sometimes it is hard to escape this conclusion; but rather the utter incompetence of some of the provincial officials and the criminal lack of provision by the Russian central authorities. They simply started the civilian prisoners eastward on the railroad, transferred them to various remote places in the great exile colony and promptly forgot about them or took no interest in their welfare that it amounted to the same thing.

The Government supplied them with only ten kopeks a day for food. It was ridiculously small and though the poorer Germans and Austrians were generally helped by their countrymen, the poorer Russians who had money, it was not long before this disappeared and the suffering was acute.

Money does the Russian guards shared their meals with the prisoners, but the guards became fewer and fewer as the distance increased and the need for food increased. The number of prisoners remained the same except for a few deaths, so even the charity failed.

Conditions of the prisoners suffered indignities such as being clubbed with the butt of a rifle when they could not march fast enough, while others were tied together with Russian criminals, both men and women.

They remained two weeks in prison at Irkutsk and were fed on 8 kopeks a day, but thirty were available at the prison canteen for those who had money.

I have the word of a thoroughly responsible American witness that on the Island of Novaya Zemlya, the old Russian barracks at Nikolai saw two East Prussian peasants, 62 and 64 years of age, who had been taken in a Cossack raid at the outbreak of the war and shipped to Siberia in slow stages. One of them had gone crazy.

Material is not lacking for the accurate description of numerous heart-rending cases in which the greater part of the suffering could have been avoided had adequate provision been made for the care of the victims of war. Lack of organization and system and indifference to human welfare where the lower classes and bothersome, unwelcome foreigners are concerned, rather than premeditated cruelty, seem to be the real explanation of the situation.

As the movement of civilian prisoners to Siberia was practically completed by the first of the year, most of them had been in permanent stations from ten to fourteen months, though many were sent from place to place in the beginning of the year. Some of them had been or died of disease probably never will be known.

The same confusion and exposure in transportation and lack of provision and accommodation at destination, which were described in connection with the civilians apply with almost equal force to the military prisoners, though it is true that the authorities endeavor to accord the latter the treatment prescribed by the laws of nations.

Gross Neglect Charged.

The first prison trains reaching Siberia were made up of all sorts of cars obviously thrown together with little regard for the system or degree of comfort. Consideration of the length of the journey, weather conditions and the problem of food and shelter were grossly neglected. The men, and frequently the women, were packed in unheated box cars and sometimes in open freight and cattle cars. Great numbers arrived at destinations in clothes hardened with ice and with hands, feet, ears or noses frozen, more dead than alive from exposure and lack of food. The Government allows each military prisoner twenty-five kopeks for food, procurable at the stations, which is cheap along the railroad, and I am told the Russian soldiers get on quite well with this sum; but owing to mismanagement it is not infrequently happened the supplies were so far between or of such short duration that food was not obtainable.

The following case was sworn to by three Austrians: A transport of convicts was to be shipped to eastern Siberia from a prison hospital in a place west of Irkutsk. On the morning of their departure these men were told by a subordinate official that they were to go to the court yard in front of the hospital and wait there until their uniforms were returned to them. The men accordingly went out to the yard, where they stood waiting for some time. They were with the thermometer registering 10 degrees below zero Centigrade, before their uniforms were given to them.

The above illustration shows the general unpreparedness of the Russian authorities to quarter prisoners of war in Siberia, and they also make clear the "leakage" that occurs between the orders of the higher officials and the execution of the orders by subordinates. At the time of my trip across Siberia prison stations had been established and occupied by German and Austrian soldiers at seven places in the Vladivostok and Primur districts. They were at Habarovsk, on the Amur River, the frontier between Russia and Korea; Khabarovsk, on a narrow gauge strategic railroad, Eugeneka-Spasskoe, about half way between Nikolai and Khabarovsk, on the Trans-Siberian; and on a branch railroad, Nikolai, on the main line boasting a population of about 200,000, and Rastvor. The following description of conditions obtained at certain of these places is from first hand information. I refer to Habarovsk, Nikolai and Rastvor.

Treated as Soldiers.

At Habarovsk there were about 4,000 non-commissioned officers and men, also some fifteen Austrian and German soldiers. They were quartered in barracks formerly occupied by Russian troops. On the words of the chief of staff at Habarovsk, the colonel of the Fourth Siberian Battalion and the surgeon in charge, they are treated as Russian regular soldiers and receive the officially approved ration. Sickiness is due to exposure in transportation or unsuitable clothing. Repeated appeals to the authorities brought forth promises and a statement that they intended to provide adequate clothing, but the winter was more than half over without any relief having been received.

According to later advice, it seems that the prisoners weathered the whole period clad as they were at the moment of capture. As they were taken for the most part in autumn and early winter, the conditions were not so severe. The difficulties of the situation need no explanation. As long as they remained in barracks they could be comfortable, but it was not possible to venture outside for more than a few minutes.

The most urgent needs at Habarovsk are for woollen socks, underwear, blankets, soap, books and tobacco. The American Red Cross and German asso-

ciations have succeeded in getting some aid to these prisoners.

Some 8,000 military prisoners were held at Nikolai on the railroad, which number included about 700 Germans. A hospital with a capacity of 265 beds, in charge of a dozen Austrian surgeons under the general supervision of a Russian army surgeon. The large number of sick keeps the beds always occupied, and several who should be in hospital have to be treated in the barracks. The records show that the principal diseases are influenza, rheumatism, dysentery, typhoid fever, the ever and frost gangrene, being in most cases the result of poor nourishment, exposure, neglect and impure water.

About fifty Austrian soldiers serve as cooks, nurses and attendants. The Russian surgeon is doing everything in his power with the limited facilities to relieve suffering. The prisoners speak of him in affectionate terms. This hospital is about the best equipped of the prison stations in Siberia. There is a good supply of medicines and surgical instruments. In this hospital the rooms are large, airy and well heated.

Are Not Forced to Work.

As at Habarovsk, with which it compares favorably, the men who are not sick occupy the Russian army barracks, and several who should be in hospital have to be treated in the barracks. They are not required to do any work other than that which is necessary for their own comfort and camp sanitation. Until the middle of December the men slept on the asphalt floors without blankets. This distressing situation was much relieved by wooden platforms which they made of materials furnished by the authorities.

On four days of the week the chief meal is at noon, and consists of the soup, a portion of potatoes, cabbage and a little meat or fish. There are also a pound of heavy black bread and two lumps of sugar per man. Complaint is common about the bread, which is so sour and soggy that it causes much stomach trouble. Tea can be had at any time. On the other three days of the week the noon meal consists of fish, which is often old and unpalatable. The water supply is bad, but those who brave the cold to walk to the hospital can have distilled water free.

When the Austrians arrived at Nikolai they were inadequately clad and suffered so severely that the authorities were moved to distribute a partial supply of boots. The leather was of the poorest quality and did not last long. Probably they were the only supply available after the Russian soldiers had been equipped. Even in peace time some of those distant posts are forced to hustle for themselves to a large extent. The prisoners' demands are for boots, warm clothing and soap, and the ever necessary insect powder. Many prisoners are undertaking the study of Russian with the help of a Russian officer and some civilians.

Tarks Among Prisoners.

With the exception of about 300 German prisoners at Rastvor, all the prisoners at Nikolai are said to have been sent there later on. In the early period of the prisoner movement many officers were quartered there, but were soon sent to other places. There have been several attempts to escape despite the almost unsurmountable natural obstacles, and the Russians keep the officers under close guard. A camp with an exceedingly bad reputation is Shkotovo, containing about 1,000 Germans and 2,000 Austrians. They are quartered in the regular barracks, which, however, are in a poor state of repair, with little or no arrangement for heating. As the prisoners here are destitute of clothes and blankets and no supplies were available for some time, the whole of last winter the suffering was unusually severe. There is the nearest presence of hospital equipment, and the military Russian surgeon, while doing his level best, is unable to give the care and treatment his cases so urgently need. No more can be done with the grievously afflicted than send them to Nikolai, where again is encountered the ever present factor of miserable facilities.

The natives of Shkotovo are reported to be unfriendly. In addition to the prisoners already mentioned there were about ten hostages taken in East Prussia and several German and Austrian officers. The following were among this number: Lieutenant Marnett (German), Assistentarzt Singer (Austrian), Regimentsrat Peters (German hostage), Oberleutnant Waack and a German Offiziersprant named Timko. It is difficult to estimate accurately the number of Teutonic military and civilian prisoners in Siberia. The authorities are exceedingly reticent and persons given to asking questions quickly fall under suspicion. Russian private citizens are as guarded in their remarks as the officials.

From the Chief of Staff of the Primur district it was learned that the prisoners are receiving the same treatment as Russian soldiers. He did not intend to estimate the number of prisoners, but in a general way left the impression that there were about 18,000 in the district. The Colonel of the Fourth Siberian Battalion apparently made no secret of the strength of several camps. He indicated that at the beginning of this year there were about 25,000 military and civilian prisoners and hostages in Eastern Siberia, scattered in eight or more places. Of this number about 600 were officers. The Germans were comparatively few, only a few hundred, the rest being Austrians. Later on after the Caucasian campaign the Siberian camps were increased five or six times.

Cold Storage
of
Furs
Plant on the
Premises.
Third Floor.

Founded 1826

Greeley 1900

Lord & Taylor

38th Street FIFTH AVENUE 39th Street

Store Hours in June, 9 A. M. to 5 P. M.

Ask Mr. Foster

Mr. Foster's people traveled 250,000 miles last year, securing information here made available for you without cost. Hotels, Routes, Resorts, Rates, Schools.

A Remarkable Offering WOMEN'S SUITS Of Imported Shantung Special \$19.50

Two Smart Sports Models Made to Sell for \$35.00 Superior quality of shantung silk in the natural color. Distinctive models with flaring, belted coats and smartest of skirts; well tailored.

Ramie Linen Suits, \$15.00

White, Rookie, Copenhagen, Green, French Grey, Lavender. Sports models, the belted coats with novel pockets, pearl button trimmed; flaring skirts.

Tailored Wool Suits \$19.50

Light weight fabrics, finely tailored and in the fashionable colors. Models with peau de cygne lined coats and fashionably wide skirts.

White Tub Skirts \$2.50, \$3.95 & \$5.00

Pique, cordeline, gabardine, honeycomb weaves and Bedford cords.

White Chinchilla Sports Coats \$17.50 & \$19.50

Distinctive models, flaring or belted. Clever collars, some faced with bright colored velvets.

New Motoring Coats \$12.50

Mulford's Palm Beach Cloth makes these smart Coats in natural color. Full length belted models with convertible collars and excellent finishing details.

Linene & Linen Dusters \$3.00, \$5.00, \$6.00

Full length Coats in fine quality natural color linene and linen; unusually smart in their lines.

Rainproof Tweed Coats \$15.00 & \$16.50

Scotch tweeds in heather and other smart mixtures for street, touring and motoring wear; practical and very modish.

TAFFETA FROCKS Of Latest Fashions Special \$25.00

Quite the smartest of new models, these Dresses of navy blue or black chiffon taffeta, so favored for Summer wear.

The waistcoat bodice, cleverly pointed, is decidedly modish, the skirt shirred at the waistline is extremely full.

Georgette crepe makes the dainty collar and a cluster of scarlet cherries adds the finishing touch to this very Parisian model.

Dainty Summer Dresses

Novelty Voiles, Marquisettes, linens, gabardines, white voiles, nets and India silks.

\$5.95, \$8.50, \$10.00, \$12.50 to \$22.50

Third Floor.

Special Reductions in UPHOLSTERIES

Madras Curtains.....\$2.75 and \$3.75 Great Variety of Materials and designs.

Scrim Curtains.....\$1.75 to \$3.75 Former Prices \$3.50 to \$7.50

Lace Panels at Half Price

Usually \$5.00 to \$15.00.....\$1.75 to \$7.50

Aurign Duck formerly 45c a yard.....20c

Cedar Chests | Dower Chests | Bedroom Boxes
\$10.50 | \$32.00 to \$50.00 | \$4.50

Remnants of Tapestries, Damasks, Brocades and Sunfast Repts at 1/2 to 1/3 Regular Prices.

Fifth Floor.

Pre-Inventary Sale LINENS

Unusual Opportunity for Savings

500 Odd Damask Table Cloths

Former prices \$5.50 to \$65.00.....\$2.75 to \$32.50

600 Dozen Fine Damask Napkins

Usual prices \$7.50 to \$20.00 dozen.....\$5.85 to \$14.85

Wm. Liddell & Co.'s "Sample" Line

At 1-3 Less Than Customary Prices

Embroidered Bed Spreads, Pillow Shams, Sheets, Pillow Cases, Tea Cloths, Scarfs, etc. Representing the "Travellers" and "New York Warehouse" Samples of this famous Belfast manufacturer.

Arabian Lace Table Cloths 72 inch size

Our former price \$13.50.....\$6.75

Hand Embroidered, Lace Trimmed Linens

Formerly.....Now

Centre Pieces.....\$3.00 to \$5.25 \$1.50 to \$2.63

Tea Cloths.....\$5.70 to \$8.25 \$2.85 to \$4.13

Lunch Cloths.....\$9.00 \$4.50

Embroidered Linens at About Half

Tea Cloths.....\$1.38 Centre Pieces.....58c

Doylies.....80c, \$1.12, \$1.38, \$1.88, \$3.88 and \$5.25

Second Floor.



Smart Novelties In Silk SPORT SCARFS

\$7.50 and \$8.95

Gay-hued Scarfs in the very newest weaves, with striped, checked, blocked or rainbow borders and deep fringed ends. In every bright color and clever color combination, these add the finishing note of style to the Sports Costume.

Exceptional Values

Ground Floor

Important Reductions! Our Entire Stock of Summer Furniture

Has Been Marked

at

25 to 33 1/3%

Less Than Former Prices

Reed, Willow, Fibre, Old Hickory, Decorated Upholstered Furniture, Canton and Garden Furniture, Maple Porch Chairs and Rockers.

Sixth Floor.

Important Reductions! A Large Collection of Summer Rugs

Has Been Marked

at

25 to 33 1/3%

Less Than Former Prices

The assortment includes Rugs of Grass, Japanese Rush and Cocoa Fibre, Rag, Cretone and Hand Braided Cloth Rugs, round and oval.

Fifth Floor.

ORIENTAL RUGS—EXTRAORDINARY SALE

Every Oriental Rug in our magnificent stock is being offered at "before the war prices" or better. For instance: Large Reductions have been made on the old prices of a great variety of

Room Size Rugs, Small Scatter Rugs and Modern and Antique Hall Runners Rugs of Guaranteed Qualities At Less Than Present Import Cost.

Fifth Floor.

GORCSIS

The Best SHOES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Years of scientific and costly experiments combined with close observation of the needs of growing feet were required to bring Sorosis Shoes for children to their present high standard of perfection.

Sorosis Juvenile Shoes are so constructed as to properly train growing feet and help them develop naturally.

All Sorosis Juvenile Shoes are made of the most carefully selected and properly seasoned leather, and are offered at the regular prices notwithstanding the shortage and increased cost of leather.

James McGreery & Co.

5th Avenue

34th Street